DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 186 721 CE 025 315

AUTHOR	Sewell, William H.; Hauser, Robert M.
TITLE	The Class of 1957--Eighteen Years after High School Graduation. CDE Working Paper 77-32.
INSTITUTION	Wisconsin Univ., Madison. Center for Demography and Ecology.
SPONS AGENCY	National Institutes of Health (DHEW), Bethesda, Md.
PUB DATE	Oct 77
GRANT	NIH-M-06275
NOTE	10p.
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Citizen Participation; Demography; *Economic Status; *Educational Experience; Educational Research; *Family Characteristics; Family Income; Females; Graduate Surveys; *High School Graduates; Job Satisfaction; Males; Religion; Vocational Followup
IDENTIFIERS	*Wisconsin

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to follow-up a sample of 1957 high school graduates in Wisconsin. Interviews were conducted by telephone and covered such matters as postsecondary education, current and past marital status, number of children, characteristics of present family, spouse's occupation and education, and participation in elections and community organizations. Among the findings reported was that although most had changed their place of residence from previous surveys in 1957 and 1964, almost 75 percent still lived in Wisconsin. Approximately nine out of ten were married and currently living with their spouses, one in twenty were separated or divorced, one in twenty had never married, and only one in a hundred were widows or widowers. Over 70 percent of the sample obtained some formal education after high school graduation, either in colleges and universities or in vocational-technical schools. Ninety-seven percent of the men and 57 percent of the women were currently employed. The average earnings for men and women were $16,900 and $7,900, respectively. Eighty-eight percent of the sample were church members. Of those with religious affiliations, 52 percent were Protestants, 45 percent were Catholics, and 3 percent belong to other religious bodies. (LRA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED186721

Center for Demography and Ecology
University of Wisconsin-Madison

THE CLASS OF 1957--EIGHTEEN YEARS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

William H. Sewell
Robert M. Hauser

CDE Working Paper 77-32

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

This research was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Health (M-06275). Computations were carried out using facilities of the Center for Demography and Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison. These facilities are supported by a Center grant from the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (HD-05876). The writers wish to acknowledge the assistance of Jim Grant in preparing the tabulations on which this report is based. We thank the staff of the Wisconsin Survey Research Laboratory for their work in interviewing and coding, and the members of our project staff: Taissa L. Hauser, Nancy Bode, Wendy C. Wolf, Blair Campbell, Brian Clarridge, Tom Daymont, Jeff Geisler, Robin Stryker, and Harold Varnis for their work in the preparation of data tapes. Finally, we are most grateful for the continued cooperation of the members of the class of 1957 without whose help this research project would not have been possible.

October 1977

CE 025 315

JUN 9 1980

CE025315

TM

JUN 1980
RECEIVED
ERIC/TM

WEECN
WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL EQUITY COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK
OPERATED FOR THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION BY FAR WEST LABORATORY UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL EQUITY ACT

WEECN Documentation Facility
ORI/Information Systems Division

4833 Rugby Avenue • Suite 205
Bethesda, Maryland 20014
(301) 654-1058

MAY 19 1980

This document has been approved by the staff of the Women's Educational Equity Communications Network for inclusion in the WEECN data base. If the document is processed for Resources in Education (RIE), please complete this sheet and return it to the ERIC Facility along with the document. If you cannot accept this document for RIE, please return the document and the filled in sheet to:

WEECN Documentation Facility
4833 Rugby Avenue, Suite #205
Bethesda, Maryland 20014

Attn: Kathleen Lohman, Acquisitions Librarian

so we may know why you found it unsuitable for ERIC. A prepaid self-addressed label has been provided for your convenience in returning the document.

NOTE: Reproduction release request for this report, if necessary, must be addressed to the author and/or institutional source of the document, not to WEECN.

WEECN Temporary Accession Number: CN002521
Document Title: The Class of 1957--Eighteen Years After High School Graduation.

Disposition of Document:
_____Selected for the _____ issue of RIE and is assigned document no. _____
_____Not selected for RIE.

Clearinghouse Name: _____
Date: _____

WF4 (7/78)

2/A

THE CLASS OF 1957--EIGHTEEN YEARS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

William H. Sewell Robert M. Hauser
Center for Demography and Ecology
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Background of the Study

The Wisconsin Study of Social and Psychological Factors in Educational, Occupational, and Economic Careers had its origins in a state-wide inquiry into decisions of youth about education beyond high school. A questionnaire was administered to seniors in all high schools in Wisconsin in 1957. A sample of approximately 10,000 of these questionnaires was selected for analysis and follow-up studies of the persons in this sample were conducted in 1964 and 1975. The 1957 questionnaire dealt with such matters as the students' educational and vocational plans, family background, place of residence, courses taken in high school, the encouragement received from parents, teachers and peers for educational plans, and related matters. The 1964 follow-up questionnaire was directed to the parents of the seniors who were asked to provide information on the current occupation or educational status, marital situation, and current residence of their son or daughter, who was a member of the class of 1957. To this information was added data from public records dealing with the schools and the students. Using this information we have produced many articles and monographs in which we have studied the influence of such factors as parents' education, occupation, and economic status, size of community of origin, rural-urban background, type of curriculum, grades in high school, academic ability, parents, teachers and peers on educational and occupational plans and achievements.

The 1975 follow-up study involved the difficult task of locating the persons who were in the 1957 sample and interviewing them about their post-high school experiences. The interviews were done by telephone by the Wisconsin Survey Research Laboratory and covered such matters as post-secondary education, current and past occupations, earnings in the past year, work satisfaction, future occupational plans, marital status, number of children, characteristics of present family, spouse's occupation and education, and participation in elections and community organizations. We succeeded in locating and interviewing more than 9,300 persons who were in the original sample. Although most had changed their place of residence from 1957 and 1964, almost 75 percent still lived in Wisconsin. It has taken more than a year to edit, code, and transfer this information to computer tapes. This brief summary of results is based on the first runs of these tapes through the computer.

Before proceeding with the results, it should be stated that the information given us by our respondents is held in strictest confidence. Information that would identify the members of our sample, such as names, addresses, telephone numbers, etc. is kept in a separate locked file and is not transferred to the computer tapes which we use in the analysis. All of our analysis is reported in tables and statistical summaries which make it impossible to identify individuals.

Our results will be discussed under the following headings: Family Formation and Dissolution; Post-High School Education; Occupational Experiences; Economic Status and Earnings; Political and Social Participation.

Family Formation and Dissolution

The behavior of the members of the class of 1957, who were on the average between 35 and 36 years of age at the time we interviewed them in 1975, provides little support for the current popular notions regarding the weakness and instability of the American family. Approximately nine out of ten are married and currently living with their spouses, one in twenty are separated or divorced, one in twenty have never married, and only one in a hundred are widows or widowers. If we look at the incidence of

divorce in our sample, we find that approximately one in ten of our respondents have been divorced at one time or another but of these more than half have remarried and are currently living with their new spouses. The men in our sample are slightly less likely to have experienced divorce than the women, but the differences are not significant. Likewise, men are slightly less likely than women to have never married.

In general the members of our sample tended to marry early. The median age at first marriage for the men was 23 (this means that they were married by this age), with less than one in ten marrying before reaching age 19, whereas, for the women, the median age at first marriage was 21 and one-third had married by age 19. As would be expected, those who did not go to college married much earlier than those who went. The median age at marriage for those who did not go to college was 20 for women and 23 for men; for those who went to college the median age at marriage was 22 for women and 24 for men. It is interesting to note that those who marry early run a high risk of divorce; almost a fourth of the men and a fifth of the women who had married in 1958 or earlier were divorced. Men who do not go on to college are more likely to be divorced than those who go to college, but there is no difference in the divorce rates of college and non-college women. The highest divorce rates in our study are for those college graduates who had married in 1958 or earlier, probably reflecting the double strain of early marriage and adjustment to college life; more than a fourth of the men and over a third of the women who married early and eventually graduated from college had been divorced at the time of the survey.

The general tendency was for both men and women to choose spouses with similar educational achievements to their own. For example, nine-tenths of the men who did not go on to post-secondary education married women who have no more than 12 years of schooling, whereas only one-third of those who graduated from college have wives who have 12 years or less schooling. For women, the same general trends hold but women are much more likely to marry men with more education than they have themselves than are men to marry women with higher educational attainments than their own. Obviously, there are many exceptions to these trends; for example, one-fifth of the men and one-tenth of the women with post-graduate degrees have spouses who have no education beyond high school.

Not only are the members of the class of 1957 strongly committed to marriage but also to having children: Less than one in ten of the families are childless, less than one in ten have only one child, and the norm is the two- or three-child family. Moreover, a considerable number of our respondents have large families--approximately one-fourth have four or more children. There is no marked difference in the number of children by the income level of the family. Those who graduate from college are likely to have the smallest families. Catholics tend to have the largest families. As would be expected, those who marry early tend to have larger families, regardless of income, education, or religion, than those who marry late.

Post-High School Education

Over 70 percent of the members of our sample eventually obtained some formal education after high school graduation, either in colleges and universities or in vocational-technical schools. Of those who obtained additional schooling, about half went to college and half to vocational-technical institutions. Sex differences are marked; approximately 80 percent of the men but only 63 percent of the women obtained post-high school education.

Three-quarters of those who attended college went directly from high school to college, but men were much more likely to delay college entry for one to five years than were women. This was probably due in large part to their desire to complete their military obligations before entering college. Of all persons who went to college one in every twenty delayed college entry for at least six years after high school graduation. A much higher proportion of those of both sexes who went directly to

college from high school eventually graduated than of those who entered college later.

Just over one-fifth of those who went to college attended a college or university outside of Wisconsin (22 percent). Most of those going to out-of-state institutions attended college in the neighboring states, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota, but at least a few attended schools in every state in the union. By far the largest number of our respondents went to the University of Wisconsin-Madison (22 percent). The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Marquette University were the next most commonly selected institutions (7 percent each). The former Wisconsin State Colleges and the extension centers taken together enrolled about 30 percent of the students. The private four-year colleges enrolled just over 12 percent. Women were less likely to enroll at the University of Wisconsin-Madison or at Marquette University than men, but were more likely than men to enroll in the other public and private colleges in Wisconsin.

The factors that had most effect on the college attendance of our respondents were, in order of importance, their sex, their grades in high school, the education of their parents, their father's occupation, the income level of their family, the size of their family, and whether they came from rural or urban communities. Of all of these, the most important was their sex. The men in our sample enjoyed a 1.3 times better chance of going to college than women. Men's chances of obtaining a Bachelor's degree were 1.5 times better than women's and of going on to graduate or professional school were 3.1 times better than for women.

As would be expected, those who made the best grades in high school were much more likely to go to college, to graduate, and to go on to post-graduate and professional schools. However, there were many people who made good grades in high school who did not go on to college, especially women; a fifth of the men and half of the women who were in the top fourth of their class did not go on to college. Also, there were many people who went to college who did not make good grades in high school; about a fifth of the men and a tenth of the women who were in the bottom fourth of their class went to college--some of them graduated and a few went on to graduate and professional schools.

Father's and mother's education was also a very important factor in the educational achievements of their children. The sons and daughters of parents who were high school graduates were much more likely to attend college than were those with less educated parents. Those whose parents had gone to college were still much more likely to attend and to graduate from college than were those whose parents had not themselves attended college. This is not to say that all students whose parents did not have the advantages of advanced education did not themselves go to college--indeed, about one-fifth of the women whose mothers had eight grades or less of schooling attended college and almost a third of the men whose fathers had only eight grades of schooling went to college. However, almost two-thirds of the daughters whose mothers had gone to college went on to college themselves and over three-quarters of the sons whose fathers had gone to college also went to college.

Those whose fathers were in the professional and managerial occupations were most likely to go on to college and eventually to receive the most education. The sons and daughters of other white-collar workers ranked next, followed by those with blue-collar backgrounds. The children of farmers were least likely of all to obtain a college education.

Family income was, of course, an important factor in college attendance for the members of the class of 1957. Of those from families whose income placed them in the top quarter of the distribution, 57 percent went to college, whereas of those whose family income was in the bottom quarter, only 25 percent went to college. The effect of family income on women's college attendance was great in all income levels. Thus, in the top income group 64 percent of the men and 51 percent of the women went to college and in the low income group 30 percent of the men and 20 percent of the women

attended college. Again the importance of parental income should not be overstated. As the above figures show, many men and women from high income families did not go to college and a sizeable number of those from families with quite low income attended college. Moreover, most of those from low income levels who went to college managed to graduate, even though they had limited financial help from their parents.

Those who came from small families, especially only children and those with not more than one brother or sister, were much more likely to go to college than were those from larger families. More than half of the men and two-fifths of the women from one- or two-child families attended college, whereas only a third of the men and a fifth of the women from families with five or more children went to college.

Those in our sample who came from rural areas and small communities were much less likely to go to college than were those from urban areas, with those from Madison and Milwaukee, the two largest cities in the state, being the most likely to attend. In all residential categories men were more likely to attend college than were women.

Occupational Experiences and Job Satisfaction

The occupational experiences of the class of 1957 are many and varied and have been markedly influenced by their sex, their family backgrounds, and their educational levels. Ninety-seven percent of the men in our sample were gainfully employed at the time of our survey, two percent were unemployed, and one percent were not in the labor force. Fifty-seven percent of the women were currently employed, three percent were unemployed, and 40 percent were not in the labor force. The low unemployment rate of the members of our sample doubtless reflects their higher than average educational status (all are at least high school graduates) and the fact that they were at, or near, their most productive age level at the time of the survey. The high level of labor force participation for the women in our sample clearly reflects the general trend in our society toward the gainful employment of women but is strikingly high in light of the fact that most of these women are married and have relatively young children.

Ninety-four percent of the mothers in our sample worked before they were married, more than three-quarters worked after their marriage and before the birth of their first child, about one-third went back to work after the birth of the first, second, or third child, and over half returned to work after the birth of their last child. Thus, it is apparent that the women in the class of 1957 are strongly committed, not only to family life and child rearing, but also to occupational careers.

Well over half (57 percent) of the men in our sample are in white-collar jobs: 24 percent are in professional work (medicine, law, engineering, teaching, etc.); 26 percent are administrators, proprietors, and managers; and 7 percent are in retail sales and clerical work. Blue-collar occupations are followed by 43 percent of the men in the sample: 18 percent are in skilled work; 17 percent are in other blue-collar work; 4 percent are in service occupations; and 4 percent are farmers.

The distribution of the occupations of the women in our sample, based on their current or last job, is quite different. More than two-thirds of the women are in white-collar occupations; they tend to be about equally represented with men in the professional category, are under-represented in the administrative, proprietors, and managers category, but are much over-represented in clerical work and retail sales (two-fifths of all employed women are in this category). If we further examine the professional category, women tend to be concentrated in two professional occupations--public school teaching and nursing--whereas men are more likely to be in the engineering, law, and medical professions.

As would be expected there is a marked relationship, for both sexes, between education and occupation. Among men with Bachelor's or advanced degrees, six out of ten are in the professions, three in ten are administrators, proprietors, and managers, and only one in ten is in other white-collar and blue-collar occupations; whereas for

those who had no post-secondary training, six out of ten are in the blue-collar occupations, one in ten is in farming, and three of every ten are in a white-collar job.

Three-quarters of the women with Bachelor's degrees are in the professional category. In contrast, almost half of the women with only high school education are in clerical and sales work, and only one-sixth are in other white-collar jobs.

We asked the respondents to tell us about their father's occupation at the time they (the respondents) were high school seniors so that we might compare son's and daughter's occupations with those of their fathers. From this comparison there are some very interesting results. There is a general tendency of occupational inheritance from father to son; that is, sons are likely to be in the same occupations as their fathers, especially in the high status occupations. Thus, four in ten of the sons of professional workers became professionals and four in ten of the sons of administrative, proprietor, and managerial workers were in the same occupational category as their fathers. The tendency of sons to be in their father's occupation is less marked for sons of blue-collar workers, about half of whom became white-collar workers, especially professionals and administrators, proprietors, and managers, probably reflecting the fact that their educational levels greatly exceed those of their fathers. The sons of farmers were almost the only recruits to farming, but even sons of farmers were more likely to become either skilled or semi-skilled workers than farmers. This doubtless is due to decreasing openings in farming.

Daughters are considerably less likely to follow their father's occupations than are sons. The one big exception is that daughters of professionals are even more likely than sons of professionals to become professionals. Otherwise, the most frequent occupational category of all women, regardless of their father's occupation, is clerical and retail sales work; and even for those whose fathers are in the professions, clerical and retail sales is the next most likely occupational destination. Roughly a quarter to a half of the daughters of fathers from each occupational category were engaged in clerical and retail sales jobs. There was also a tendency for women from all occupational backgrounds to enter professional occupations, ranging from one-sixth of the daughters of semi-skilled and unskilled fathers to one-half of the daughters of professionals.

We asked employed persons in the class of 1957 to tell us about the level of their satisfaction with their current or last job. In light of recent claims in the public press about the alienation of people from their work, it is interesting to learn that less than one in ten members of the class of 1957 indicated <u>any</u> degree of dissatisfaction with their current or last jobs. There were no marked differences in the levels of job satisfaction between men and women. There was little, if any, relation between level of education and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction varies some according to occupation. Those in the administrative, proprietor, or managerial category tend to be most satisfied and semi-skilled and unskilled workers are least satisfied with their jobs, but in no other occupational category than the latter do as many as one in ten of the men or women indicate any dissatisfaction with their jobs.

When asked whether they would continue to work if they were completely free to choose not to, almost nine out of every ten men and women said they would choose to continue to work. The level of education of the respondent had little relationship to the choice among men, but among women those with college degrees were more likely than those with less education to say that they would continue to work, even if free to choose not to.

As still another indicator of work satisfaction, we asked people to tell us whether ten years in the future they would wish to work at the same job they now hold or at some other job. Here there is a substantial difference between the sexes: over half (54 percent) of the men said they would choose to work in the same job, but well under half (44 percent) of the women desire to work at the same job. Level of education has little relationship to desire for job change for either sex. However, there is a marked difference in the wish to be in a different job according to current

occupational category for both sexes. Among men, only one in every six farmers would like to be in another job in the future, in contrast with those in clerical and retail sales, semi-skilled and unskilled jobs, and service work, where over half of the workers would like to be in other jobs. Among women, professional workers and administrators, proprietors, and managers are most definite about wishing to remain in their current work, whereas those who are in blue-collar and service jobs are most likely to wish to change jobs in the future. The greater satisfaction of men with their current job probably reflects the fact that men in our society are more likely to have greater choice than women in the choice of occupations. Also, men have had longer and more continuous employment experience than women. Thus, by mid-life men have established occupational careers that they like or to which they have fully accommodated.

Economic Status: Earnings

Of all of the differences between men and women in the class of 1957, the greatest contrast is in the annual earnings they report for full-time year-around work. The average (mean) earnings for men and women are $16,900 and $7,900, respectively. (These are the total earnings of all full-time workers divided by the number of workers.) The median earnings of men are $15,000 and of women $8,000. (This means that half of the men [or women] earned more than this figure and half earned less.)

There is great variation between the sexes in annual earnings according to educational level. For males the median salary of those who had no post-secondary education is $12,900; for those with vocational-technical education it is $14,000; for those with some college it is $15,100; for those with a Bachelor's degree it is $18,300; and for those with post-graduate and professional training it is $20,100. Among women the differences in earnings were also great according to educational level. The median for those with no post-secondary education is $6,800; for those with vocational-technical training it is $7,300; for those with some college it is $7,700; for those with Bachelor's degrees it is $9,300; and for those with post-graduate or professional training it is $13,400. Note that for equal levels of education men received much higher levels of compensation than women.

When we examine men's median earnings by occupational classification, we find, as would be expected, that those in the professional category and those in the administrative, proprietors, and managers category earn far more than those in any other category, the medians being $16,900 and $17,800, respectively. Men in skilled work earn more than clerical and retail sales workers, the medians being $14,300 and $13,500, respectively. Men in semi-skilled and unskilled work and those in service work follow with medians of $13,100 and $12,700, respectively. Farmers report by far the lowest earnings; their median is $9,200.

In every occupational category women's median earnings are much lower than men's. The contrasts are greatest in the administrative, proprietors, and managers category, where women's median earnings are $9,000 below the median for men. The median full-time annual earnings of women in this category are 49 percent of those of men. But in every other category the differences also are great; for example, in the two other categories in which women are commonly employed, clerical and retail sales, and service work, their median earnings are only 58 percent and 51 percent, respectively, of the male medians. Women's medians are more nearly equal to men's in the professions but are still only 62 percent of male averages.

The major conclusions that may be drawn from our analysis of men's and women's educational, occupational, and economic experiences are:

Women, even though they earn somewhat better grades in high school, are less likely to go to college, less likely to graduate from college, and much less likely to go on to post-graduate and professional training than men.

Women are considerably less likely to be employed than men and, if employed, are more likely to be in part-time jobs. Women are likely to be concentrated in the

professional occupational category--especially as teachers and nurses, in clerical and sales work, and in service work. Men tend to be spread more evenly throughout all categories of occupations.

Men in full-time employment have much higher annual earnings than women. These differences cannot be fully explained by the fact that men ultimately obtain more education and better jobs than women. At every educational level men's full-time annual (median) earnings exceed those of women by from $6,100 for those with only high school education to $9,000 for those with Bachelor's degrees. In every occupational category men's median earnings greatly exceed women's; the differences range from $9,000 for those in the administrative, proprietors, and managers category to $5,500 for those in the service occupations.

Social Participation and Related Matters

The members of the class of 1957 were at mid-life (aged 35-36) at the time they were interviewed and, since most of them had school aged children, were at the stage in their life-cycle in which interest and participation in community affairs is likely to be greatest. This is clearly reflected in the extent of their membership in community organizations. Perhaps the most striking fact is that 88 percent of the members of our sample are church members: 87 percent of the men and 89 percent of the women. Of those with religious affiliations 52 percent are Protestants, 45 percent are Catholics, and only 3 percent belong to other religious bodies. Not only does the overwhelming majority belong to church but also over half attend services weekly; almost a third attend twice a month; and, approximately a sixth attend less frequently or not at all. There are sharp differences between the sexes in church attendance with women being more likely to attend regularly than men. Level of education makes little difference in church attendance but the most striking difference between the sexes is that women who did not go on to college are the most likely of all educational categories to attend church regularly, whereas men in this educational category are the least likely to attend church regularly.

On the average, our sample members belong to two or more community organizations, in addition to their church. More than a third belong to three or more organizations and more than a tenth are members of five or more organizations. There are some sex differences in membership in organizations. Contrary to usual expectations, the women in our sample are less likely to belong to organizations, other than church, than are the men. The lower membership of women in organizations perhaps may be explained by the fact that a majority of them work outside of the home and also are homemakers with relatively young children to take care of. Consequently, they have less time and possibly less energy for community organizations than do men. Membership in organizations varies by education for both sexes: The general rule is the higher the educational level, the more organizations to which one belongs.

When we examine active participation, as indicated by frequent attendance and by holding offices and responsible positions in organizations, we find that, even though some of our respondents are only minimally involved, at least two-thirds are active participants in one or more community organizations (other than church) and almost half are actively involved in two or more organizations. Again, men are somewhat more likely to be actively involved than women and the higher the educational level the greater the active involvement in the organizations of the community.

The single community organization (other than church) in which the largest segment of our respondents (over one-third) participated is the PTA. Sports teams were only slightly less likely to draw the participation of our sample members. Other organizations in which sample members are quite likely to participate include youth groups, professional associations, labor unions, and civic and business organizations, each of which was participated in by 15 to 20 percent of our respondents. Organizations in which 5 to 15 percent of the sample participate include: fraternal, charitable, and veterans

organizations; neighborhood improvement associations; political clubs; country clubs; and community centers. In some of these organizations, participation differs greatly according to the sex of the respondent. Thus, women are more likely to participate in PTA, church related organizations, organizations for children and youth, and charitable organizations, and men are more frequently participants in sports teams, labor unions, professional associations, and fraternal organizations.

Two other aspects of participation should be mentioned, neither of which involves membership in formal organizations. The first is voting in elections. The members of our sample were asked if they had voted in the most recent congressional election (November 1974). Seventy-three percent of both men and women of the class of 1957 reported that they had voted. This is an unusually high percentage in comparison with that of all eligible voters in the state (38 percent) and may be explained by two facts: Our sample is at an age in which political interest tends to be high, and our sample is composed of people who are all at least high school graduates. All studies of voting behavior show that the higher the educational level of the person, the more likely he/she is to vote. This same rule holds true even in our relatively highly educated sample. The range in voting is from 64 percent for those with no post-high school education to 83 percent for college graduates. Blue-collar workers were least likely and professional workers were most likely to have voted; the percentages voting are 66 and 80 percent, respectively.

The second matter of interest is the extent to which our respondents pay informal visits to or receive visits from their friends. We asked about the number of visits with friends in a month. Six out of every ten of our respondents reported four or more visits per month and fewer than one in ten reported no visits. Women tend to visit more with friends than do men but the only marked difference is that women are more likely to report five or more visits per month.

In sum, the members of the class of 1957 are active participants in the organizational life of their communities, especially in church activities and in those organizations dealing with children and youth, sports and recreation, and occupational interests. They are active in political affairs and are much more likely to vote in important elections than are citizens generally. Moreover, they have frequent informal visiting relationships with their relatives, friends, and neighbors. By no way do the members of the class of 1957 resemble the stereotypic picture of the uninvolved and alienated young citizen of the United States so frequently portrayed in the mass media!

Postscript

Our purpose in this brief report, directed mainly to our respondents to the 1975 survey, has been to describe and summarize the experiences and accomplishments of the members of the class of 1957, eighteen years after their graduation from Wisconsin high schools. More detailed studies of the data from the interviews will be made in the future in an attempt to understand as completely as possible the complex processes that may account for some of the striking differences we have noted in this report. These findings will be presented in a series of articles and monographs over the course of the next several years. It is our hope that this work will contribute to the general understanding of factors that influence the experiences and achievements of people at various points over the course of their lives. We shall probably not attempt to conduct detailed reinterviews with the members of the class of 1957 for several years. But we hope that they will continue to cooperate as they have in the past in this important enterprise because in so doing they will be contributing to a truly unique study. No other large group of people have been so successfully followed over the years nor as extensively studied as the class of 1957. We appreciate the cooperation we have had from every member of our sample and we renew our pledge to make good use of the research data they have so graciously furnished us.